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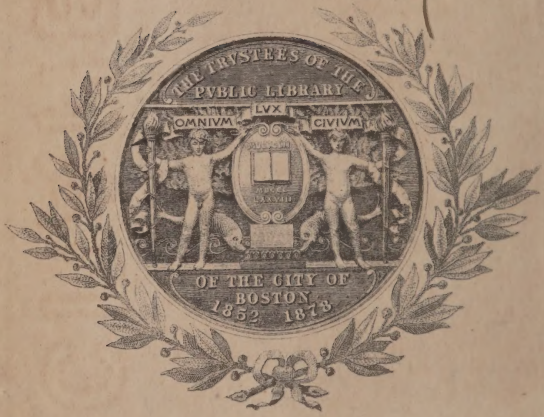
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CRITICAL COMMENTS

UPON CERTAIN

SPECIAL PASSAGES IN THE INTRODUCTORY PORTION OF DR. EDWARD H. CLARKE'S BOOK ON "SEX IN EDUCATION."

7598.207

BY

WILLIAM B. GREENE.

BOSTON:
LEE AND SHEPARD, PUBLISHERS.

NEW YORK:
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From 7598.20
356.108
Nov. 29, 1884.

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It has been remarked, both recently and of old time, that man comprises in himself two natures, — on the one hand, the nature of an angel, and, on the other, the nature of a beast. He is both animal and spiritual. If he lives to his spiritual nature, he enters upon eternal life; but, if he lives to his animal nature, the sentence has already gone forth against him: "Dying, thou shalt surely die!" And the death-sentence takes hold upon man in the precise proportion that beastliness assumes predominance in his life. For man, the death of the body is inevitable, and is determined by time and circumstance; but, with proper precaution, the death of the soul may be totally avoided.

Dr. Edward H. Clarke has four mottoes to his little book on "Sex in Education," — one from Dr. Holmes, and which Dr. Holmes will probably not be pleased to find cited in this connection; one from Guizot, which appears to be important, accurate, and full of truthfulness of spirit; another from Charles Lamb, directly contradicting the one from Guizot;

and, finally, one from Plato. These mottoes read thus: —

"An American female constitution, which collapses just in the middle third of life, and comes out vulcanized india-rubber, if it happen to live through the period where health and strength are most wanted." — OLIVER WENDELL HOLMES.

"We trust that the time now approaches when man's condition shall be progressively improved by the force of reason and truth, when the brute part of nature shall be crushed, that the godlike spirit may unfold." — GUIZOT.

"He reverenced and upheld, in every form in which it came before him, womanhood . . . What a woman should demand is respect for her as she is a woman. Let her first lesson be, with sweet Susan Winstanley, to reverence her sex." — CHARLES LAMB.

"Is there any thing better in a State than that both women and men be rendered the very best? There is not." — PLATO.

Jesus said, "They that rise from the dead neither marry, nor are given in marriage, but are as the angels which are in heaven" (Mark xii. 25). There is no sex for the soul. If the American women stand on Guizot's maxim, they may win a point; but, if they stand on Charles Lamb's maxim, they abdicate the rights inhering in their angelic nature (which the New Testament says is unsexual), and stamp on themselves the superscription of the beast, under whose banners they enlist. *Womanhood* as such, like *manhood* as such, and like every thing else that is distinctively sexual, belongs not to the angelic, but to the beastly part of human nature. It dies in the dying of the body, and knows no immortality. Plato wishes women and men to be rendered their very best; but he does not say — at the least he does not say it in the passage quoted by Dr. Clarke — that he considers that best to be the perfect contradistinction of

the two as sexual animals. We are persuaded that Plato agrees in this matter with Guizot rather than with Charles Lamb. Dr. Clarke says afterwards, in his preface, —

"Great plainness of speech will be observed throughout this essay. The nature of the subject it discusses, the general misapprehension both of the strong and weak points in the physiology of the woman question, and the ignorance displayed by many, of what the co-education of the sexes really means, all forbid that ambiguity of language, or euphemism of expression, should be employed in the discussion. *The subject is treated solely from the standpoint of physiology.*"

The Italics are ours. We approve of plainness of speech, and shall observe it in our own remarks. The reader is warned beforehand. He knows, before reading the body of Dr. Clarke's book, just what he is to expect. Woman's constitution as a mere animal is to be fully considered; and her angelic nature — of which nothing can be perceived from the physiological standpoint — is to be ignored: and this in a book treating of woman's *education*. Now the education of woman is nothing other than her progress as an immortal soul, and is to be contradistinguished from her mere instruction, and, much more, from simple animal training. The doctor says, in the beginning of the book, —

"Both sexes are bound by the same code of morals: both are amenable to the same divine law. Both have a right to do the best they can; or, to speak more justly, both should feel the duty, and have the opportunity, to do their best. Each must justify its existence by becoming a complete development of manhood or womanhood; and each should refuse whatever limits or dwarfs that development."

The first part of this extract is obviously true; but, in the last part, the author is at direct issue with the founder of the Christian religion. Jesus calls on men and women to be spiritual, and spiritual at the direct expense of the flesh. The spirit is devoid of sex. Jesus did not say to the young man who had great possessions, or to Lazarus, whom he raised from the dead, "Develop your *manhood*." Neither did he tell Mary Magdalen, or the woman who anointed his feet, "and was a sinner," or his own mother, to cultivate *womanhood*. Thus far, Dr. Clarke says nothing at all about religion as having a bearing on the education of girls; and yet, in the common opinion, a woman devoid of religion is not worth the salt she eats. We are persuaded that something might be written from the "standpoint" of religion about the education of girls. We always liked Saint Theresa, and mainly because she said, when she was reduced to her last four cents, "Theresa is nothing, and four cents are not much; but Theresa, four cents, and God are all things." Theresa forgot her own miserable carcass, and thought of God. We apprehend that nothing will be found in all her voluminous writings, inculcating the duty of a complete development of "womanhood." We are aware that a woman has a body as well as an immortal soul, and have nothing to say in derogation of the body; but the question in hand relates to "education." The doctor goes on to say, —

"The problem of woman's sphere, to use the modern phrase, is not to be solved by applying to it abstract principles of right and wrong. Its solution must be obtained from physiology, not

from ethics or metaphysics. The question must be submitted to Agassiz and Huxley, not to Kant or Calvin, not to Church or Pope."

The "sphere" of woman, *quoad* womb-man, or man as distinctively characterized by the possession of a womb, is, without question, a matter of physiological determination; but woman is essentially a human being as well as a *womb*-man, and, as such, lives three lives: (1) a life of the body, (2) a life of the soul, and (3) a life of the spirit. Woman, *quoad* human being, has *three* spheres, not *one* sphere only. Of one of these spheres the physiologist knows more than either the lawyer or the clergyman. In matters relating to another of these spheres, the lawyers, after consulting Kant, or some other metaphysician, give opinions, which, in the public estimation, are of more weight than those of the physiologists and the clergymen. In matters pertaining to the third sphere, it is the authority of Calvin and of other clergymen, of the Church, and of the Pope, that takes precedence. Woman's sphere is not simple, but complex: it is *triple* as well as *one*. Abstract principles of right and wrong, and maxims of ethics, metaphysics, and theology, as well as physiological considerations, enter as essential elements into the problem of woman's sphere. The Pope knows as much about woman as Agassiz ever did, but in a different way. The claim of the physiologists to sit in judgment, and to determine the exact limits of woman's sphere, denying the right of the lawyers and clergymen to hold and express any opinion on the matter, is exorbitant. The physiologists, sitting

alone, do not constitute a court of competent jurisdiction.

"What can woman best do? A girl can hold a plough and ply a needle after a fashion. If she can do both better than a man, she ought to be both farmer and seamstress; but if, on the whole, her husband can hold best the plough, and she ply best the needle, they should divide the labor."

For purposes of mere education (and education is the matter under discussion), a person should exercise himself the more assiduously in things for which he has the less natural aptitude.

"Man is not superior to woman, nor woman to man. The relation of the sexes is one of equality, not of better and worse, or of higher and lower. By this it is not intended to say that the sexes are the same. They are different, widely different, from each other, and so different, that each can do, in certain directions, what the other cannot; and in other directions, where both can do the same things, one sex, as a rule, can do them better than the other; and in other matters they seem to be so nearly alike, that they can interchange labor without perceptible difference."

All this is so.

"Much of the discussion of the irrepressible woman-question, and many of the efforts for bettering her condition and widening her sphere, seem to ignore any difference of the sexes; seem to treat her as if she were identical with man, and to be trained in precisely the same way; as if her organization, and consequently her function, were masculine, not feminine. There are those who write and act as if their object were to assimilate woman as much as possible to man, by dropping all that is distinctively feminine out of her, and putting into her as large an amount of masculineness as is possible."

This, also, is so. But, if it be a mistake to ignore the difference of the sexes, it is also a mistake to

suppose that human nature, as embodied in the two sexes, is not always identical to itself. Woman is just twice as much identical with man as she is different from him; for men and women are alike in soul and spirit, and different in body only. The theory that a woman is filling her sphere when she is in a condition to conceive a proper child, and to nurse it healthily after it is born, is (putting the point with extreme moderation) much more satisfactory from the standpoint of the man than it is from that of the woman. Such a view of the case is Oriental and far-fetched. Suppose the nearer, more practical, and Occidental case of a Massachusetts "schoolmarm" of an uncertain age, who was never married, and who long ago outgrew the expectation of ever being married. This woman probably recollects the time when her womanhood was complete; but, as she found no use for it, she long ago turned her thoughts upon other things. At the present moment, she perhaps find herself doing man's work for woman's pay, and therefore requiring more "masculineness" in her composition than man has; for she finds herself obliged to make both ends meet under harder conditions than man is subjected to. Perhaps it is because she has infirm parents to support, and young children of deceased sisters to care for, that she "drops all that is distinctively feminine out of her, and puts into herself as large an amount of masculineness as is possible." She certainly has a call for all the grit she can command. Shall this woman, intelligent, well-educated, knowing her own position, and knowing the existing condition of society, go into her

school, look upon her flock of girl-scholars, and remember the sole maxims of sexual physiology, to the exclusion of much more important matters of equally real fact? She knows perfectly well, that — under the present system of industrial production and economic distribution, and under the consequences of that system as determined by the general civilization of the nineteenth century — less than one-half of her girls will ever be decently married, less than one-half of them will ever have a legitimate use for their womanhood, and that the womanhood of the majority will be simply a monthly curse to them. She knows that the majority of her girls are predestined to do man's work; that is to say, that they are predestined to support themselves by their own toil, and to earn a living for such other persons as may become dependent upon them for support. There are many more women in Massachusetts than there are men: what disposal can you make, physiologically, of the womanhood of the surplus? Without doubt, woman suffrage, the co-education of the sexes, the admission of women to men's colleges, and the like, are all bosh,* and mainly because utterly inadequate to the result the women expect from them; but the indignant impulse which causes our supposititious school-marm (and, as for that, she is *real* enough) to clamor mistakenly for them, is, nevertheless, the most respectable thing there is out.

"Some who hold and advocate these views are of those, who, having passed middle life without the symmetry and development

* This word is a very proper one to use in this place, since it is pure Hebrew, and has the same meaning in Hebrew that it has in English

that maternity gives, have drifted into the hermaphroditic condition that sometimes accompanies spinsterism."

They who take cognizance of all the facts (moral, spiritual, and physical), and refuse to look at human relations from the sole physiological standpoint, find, in view of the social misfortune here alluded to, an occasion for pitiful indulgence, and for softened and qualified statements and judgments. It is not always through inexcusable perverseness that a spinster drifts into the hermaphroditic condition: to maintain the contrary would be an assault on legal and conventional morality. By reason of social circumstances over which they have no control, marriage may or may not be possible to them; but simple maternity is always, at some period of their lives, within easy reach of the spinsters. After all, with the physiological facts dead against her, there is something soldier-like and priestly, and also a certain heroism, in the life of a Massachusetts spinster.

"The loftiest ideal of humanity, rejecting all comparisons of inferiority and superiority between the sexes, demands that each shall be perfect in its kind, and not be hindered in its best work. The lily is not inferior to the rose, nor the oak superior to the clover; yet the glory of the lily is one, and the glory of the oak is another, and the use of the oak is not the use of the clover."

God created the grass, trees, birds, great whales, cattle, and the like, each individual according to the *kind* of that individual; but he created man*kind* (men and women) in his own image. The true *kind* of woman is *the image of God.*

"The presumption is, that if woman, subjected to a masculine training, arranged for the development of a masculine organization,

can" [sometimes] "equal man, she ought to excel him, if educated by a feminine training, arranged to develop a feminine organization. . . . It may be affirmed that an appropriate method of education for girls — one that should not ignore the mechanism of their bodies, or blight any of their vital organs" [or any of their spiritual faculties] — "would yield a better result than any the world has yet seen."

This is timely, excellent, and well stated.

"Boys must study and work in a boy's way, and girls in a girl's way. They may study the same books, and attain an equal result, but should not follow the same method. . . . For both sexes there is no exception to the law, that their greatest power and largest attainment lie in the perfect development of their organization."

The histories of the saints, both male and female, demonstrate, that in them, very frequently, the physical organization, so far from being "perfectly developed," is, on the contrary, wilted and withered. The souls of the saints and saintesses shine out from their mortified and attenuated bodies, as a candle shines through the transparent sides of a lantern. St. Paul said, "I keep my body under." St. Theresa crucified her flesh, and became the spiritual mother of an innumerable progeny, gathered out of all nations, of saintlike men and women. Would the result have been any more satisfactory, if Theresa, after perfecting the development of her special organization, *quoad* womb-man, had become the physical maternal ancestor of a particular line of robust leatherheads?

"Wherein the girls are men, they should be educated as men: wherein they are women, they should be educated as women.

The physiological motto is, Educate a man for manhood, a woman for womanhood, both for humanity. In this lies the hope of the race."

Dr. Clarke overestimates the value of manhood. Isaac Newton, if the biographers are to be believed, never experienced the sentiment of manhood. The same is affirmed of Charles XII., the heroic Swedish king. A great part of the French people have always refused to believe that the great Napoleon was the father of the King of Rome. Men of the stamp of George Washington, or of Andrew Jackson, beget no children. Cæsar had no heirs of his own body. Alexander the Great had no heirs of his own body. Charlemagne had children who inherited no one quality of their father; and what guaranty have we that they were his? Accumulators of property establish lines and houses; and their capacities and capabilities are transmitted from generation to generation: but where are the existing illustrious representatives, by virtue of actual descent, of Luther, Calvin, Melancthon, Shakspeare, Milton, Raphael, Michael Angelo, Columbus, Cortez, Pizarro, and their peers? Such illustrious representatives of past greatness may, possibly, at the present time, exist somewhere; but we seldom hear of them. Noble houses are usually founded by successful soldiers, statesmen, and counsellors; but they receive the element of endurance, which is their distinguishing characteristic, then only when they become established on a sound property basis in land, and when, through intermarriages, the blood of the founders has been practically eliminated, and new blood — blood representing conservatism, to the exclusion of

active energy — has been brought into them. When a great man, like Lord Byron, rises up to further illustrate an already illustrious line, he is usually, in respect to the matter of his singular abilities, the son of his mother, and the near or remote descendant of some man who bears, not his and his father's, but his mother's name. Again: the word "educate," as the doctor here uses it, is out of place: the proper word would be "train." The physiological motto should read, "*Train* a man for manhood, a woman for womanhood, both for humanity." From the sole physiological standpoint, the word "educate" is void of meaning.

"Perhaps it should be mentioned, in this connection, that, throughout this paper, education is not used in the limited and technical sense of intellectual or mental training alone. By saying there is a boy's way of study and a girl's way of study, it is not asserted that the intellectual process which masters Juvenal, German, or chemistry, is different for the two sexes. Education is here intended to include what its etymology indicates, — the drawing-out and development of every part of the system; and this necessarily includes the whole manner of life, physical and psychical, during the educational period."

Whenever the word "education is used in the sense of intellectual or mental *training*, alone" or other, it is used wrongly. What Dr. Clarke appears to have in his mind, when he affirms that a general *training*, which applies to the whole human system, is equivalent to an education, is not properly "education," *or drawing-out*, but drill and discipline. Drill and discipline are never equivalent to education: they give culture, not education. Education implies vocation; and, where vocation is absent, education is impossible.

Under a fair show of words, the doctor appears to be really ignoring the existence of the human soul, and the fact of its essential spontaneity. John Bunyan was a man of no culture at all, but one who, from his own spiritual struggles, aided by the Spirit of the Most High, and without any special physical training, received a consummate education. No possible culture could have produced the "Pilgrim's Progress." Cobbett was a man of education without culture. Shakspeare had very little culture. Milton was a man of both education and culture, but of more culture than education. The doctor introduces the word "psychical" very aptly; but why is he so delicate in his mention of the human soul that he speaks of it in Greek, as though it were something requiring, for its proper indication, a term constructed according to the analogy of the jargon of physical science? The human soul is something respectable enough to deserve a mention in plain English. If, to the doctor's mind, the word "soul" stands for any thing more than a mere efflorescence of the material organism which is man's body, the doctor fails to give any adequate evidence of the fact.

"It has been and is the misfortune of this country, and particularly of New England, that education, stripped of its proper signification, has popularly stood for studying, without regard to the physical training, or no training, that the schools afford."

That is so. Dr. Clarke might have added to his extract from Plato another passage, wherein the great philosopher affirms that "VIRTUE" (including, of course, the sentiments of justice and mercy, and

the appreciation of beauty and the faculty for it, whether in material things, which is art-power, or in honorable and heroic character and conduct, which is a faculty of a higher kind) "CANNOT BE TAUGHT." If the Creator puts no "virtue" into a man's spiritual nature, no one else can put it in; and the man must get along as well as he can without it. From that which contains nothing, nothing can be "drawn out." It is high time that the school-teachers, the school-committees, and the honorable, the board of education, should be authoritatively *informed* that *instruction* (or piling in) is not education (or *drawing out*.) We now come to a matter of greater present interest.

"The delicate bloom, early but rapidly-fading beauty, and singular pallor, of American girls and women, have almost passed into a proverb. The first observation of a European that lands upon our shores is, that our women are a feeble race; and, if he is a physiological observer, he is sure to add, 'They will give birth to a feeble race, not of women only, but of men as well.' 'I never saw before so many pretty girls together,' said Lady Amberley to the writer, after a visit to the public schools of Boston; and then added, 'They all looked sick.'"

Dr. Clarke quotes the opinion of an English woman: we will quote the counter-opinion, as expressed by another English woman. When the writer of this critical commentary was living in Paris, many years ago, he had the privilege to be present in a parlor almost filled with American ladies, at an evening party given in honor of Mrs. Gaskell, the distinguished author of "Mary Barton." The lady is, without doubt, well known to the reader by reputation. After an hour or so of general conversation, Mrs.

Gaskell suddenly became very silent, and appeared to be watchful and reflecting. She remained after the rest of the company went away, with the intention, as we supposed, of telling the last part of a terrific ghost-story she had begun before the company came, and had not had time to finish; but she soon undeceived us by entering upon an enthusiastic discourse in praise of the beauty of American women. We replied to her with the orthodox formulas, and told her that "the delicate bloom indicated sickliness;" that "the beauty soon faded;" and that, if America had the handsomer girls, England had the handsomer women. Mrs. Gaskell answered, "That is not so. The contrary is true. I have now, for many years, carefully watched such of the American girls and women as we see in Europe. In your country, *every* girl is pretty during some brief period of her life; while in Europe there are many girls who are not, never have been, and never will be, pretty. You see American girls fade, and praise English women because they do not thus fade; but you must remember that those special English women that are now in your mind never were pretty, and had nothing to fade from. Besides, it is not true that the beauty of the American women always fades. There were here, this evening, three ladies who are no longer at all young, and they are all three of them of extraordinary beauty, as beauty goes here in Europe, and of a beauty appropriate to their age." We reflected for a moment, and acknowledged that Mrs. Gaskell was in the right. The exact fact seems to be this: the American girls are the prettiest in Christendom; they

fade after they are married; and their beauty returns to them when their health becomes again consolidated. The city of Boston has as many handsome old ladies as any other city of its size in the whole world.

There is a great deal of humbug ventilated about the degeneracy of the American women. It was affirmed in the early part of the late war, that the Southern armies were made up of Crackers, and poor white trash; but it was demonstrated to the North, and to its entire satisfaction, before the war was over, that the Southern women had by no means "given birth to a feeble race, not of women only, but of men as well." And we venture to affirm that no Southern soldier will say any thing in derogation of the capacity of Northern women to bring forth men-children competent, upon attaining the age for military service, to ride a horse, to carry a musket, and to handle cannon. The majority of our best soldiers had pale, spiritual-looking mothers, with the American nerve in them, such as you seldom see in Europe, — women whose souls shine through them. Women of this pallid, spiritual style of beauty seldom give birth to boobies. [It frequently happens that the English observer, just landing on our shores, who is moreover a physiologist, is also an ass.]

We are persuaded that the greater number of the sick girls who have come under Dr. Clarke's care are heiresses, girls who have been "unsphered" by reason of their exceptional social position. Now, the general ill-health of the heiresses is no argument to prove that all, or an inordinate number, of the American girls are in an unhealthy condition. The heiresses

form an imperceptible fraction of the population; for not one woman in a hundred ever inherits any thing to speak of in the way of property. The ill-health of the working-girls, that is to say, of the majority of our girls, is to be attributed to causes other than those especially dwelt upon by Dr. Clarke. "The curse of the poor is their poverty." We suspect, that outside of New England, and of some of the Western cities, it is not in the schools frequented by the children of the mass of the people, but in the high schools, the normal schools, the expensive boarding-schools, and the colleges, that the sexual apparatus of the girls becomes unshipped. If all the heiresses in the country should die to-night, there would be great mourning in families, and good reason for great mourning; but American society as a whole would be totally unconscious of the gap. Nevertheless, it ought to be noticed, in this particular connection, that some of our most heroic soldiers were the sons of very rich and very pale-faced heiresses.

"To a large extent, our present system of educating girls is the cause of their pallor and weakness. . . . Let it be remembered that this is not asserting that such methods of education are the sole cause of female weakness, but only that they are one cause, and one of the most important causes, of it. An immense loss of female power may be fairly charged to irrational cooking and indigestible diet. We live in the zone of perpetual pie and doughnut; and our girls revel in those unassimilable abominations. Much, also, may be credited to artificial deformities strapped to the spine, or piled on the head; much to corsets and skirts; and as much to the omission of clothing where it is needed as to excess where the body does not require it: but, after the amplest allowance for these as causes of weakness, there remains a large margin of dis-

ease unaccounted for. Those grievous maladies which torture a woman's earthly existence, called leucorrhœa, amenorrhœa, dysmenorrhœa, chronic and acute ovaritis, prolapsus uteri," &c.

Let us stop right here. The pale-faced, spiritual beauty of the American women goes straight to the hearts of the men; not only to the hearts of the American men, but to the hearts of men beyond the seas, wherever the American women travel, and show themselves. Roseate beauty is a rejoicing to the eyes; but pallid beauty speaks to the soul. Will Dr. Clarke pretend that all the men, with the exception of a few physiologists, are fraudulently deceived? Will he pretend that the spiritual aspect of our women is to be attributed, to a large extent, not to the spirit that is in them, and that shines through them, but to bad education, doughnuts, bustles, chignons, corsets, hoop-skirts, too much clothing on one part of the body, too little on another, and to the diseases he designates by hard names constructed out of the dead languages; which names we have the satisfaction never to have seen before, and which we are unable to find in our dictionary? Victoria Woodhull has already made this brutal exposition, and has done it much better than the doctor is doing it after her. Victoria Woodhull, in the prosecution of her stirpicultural mission, hammers on the same anvil that Dr. Clarke hammers on. She has no call to answer the doctor; but other ladies, who differ from the doctor, and would like to reply to him, have no chance against him. Cavalry cannot charge at full gallop through dense woods. These other ladies are particular about their style of writing, are solicitous

to avoid obscenity in expression, and cannot follow the doctor where he goes. The doctor is obviously in the right, and common-sense supports him, so long as he keeps clear of ethics, metaphysics, social questions, and offensive physiological tactics: he might, therefore, have afforded to be generous, and to have met the ladies in a chivalrous way in the open field. Is it the fault of the women that their Creator has made them liable to diseases from which the men are by nature exempt, and which the ladies say the men have no right to talk about in public, and which the ladies refuse to talk about in public? Grant that the girls are ignorant and take no proper care of their bodies: what follows? It follows that private physicians in private families have been taking fees for the last hundred years, not rendering in full the services for which the fees were paid. It is as much the duty of the physicians to privately admonish the mothers of the girls in respect to their daughters' health as it is the duty of the priests to instruct both mothers and daughters in points pertaining to the salvation of their souls. These matters that are publicly bruited by Dr. Clarke have become a public scandal; and it is mainly the fault of family physicians that the grounds for this scandal ever came to exist. It is obvious, however, from the plain tenor of his book, that Dr. Clarke is not himself liable to censure for neglecting to inform the women in respect to their physiological duties. He, at least, has cleared *his* skirts. But he ought to have assaulted the medical fraternity in Latin, not the women in English.

"Let the statement be emphasized and reiterated, until it is heeded, that woman's neglect of her own organization, though not the sole explanation and cause of her many weaknesses, more than any single cause, adds to their number, and intensifies their power."

"More than any single cause." Is the doctor's insight so exclusive, that it renders him blind to the general movement of the world he lives in? Our women are sickly, not simply because they have not studied physiology, not through the fault of the schools only, not merely because they have had a defective physical training, but, also, because the advance of the nineteenth century civilization has left them all stranded in a false social position. The material and social revolution which has taken place in the course of the last eighty or a hundred years has rendered American housekeeping more and more impossible, and has definitively displaced "the sphere" of the American women. The position of the single women is already untenable, and that of the married women is rapidly becoming impossible. The difficulty is not where the doctor places it, but in existing laws and customs which belong, to a very great extent, exclusively to a state of society that is rapidly passing away, — laws and customs that are now practically shutting out the American women from any legitimate "sphere" of activity in the new form of society that is gradually establishing itself. Advancing civilization has destroyed woman's former "sphere," and has not yet given her a new one.

"Our great-grandmothers are pointed at as types of female physical excellence; their great-grand-daughters, as illustrations

of female physical degeneracy. There is consolation, however, in the hope, based on substantial physiological data, that our great-grand-daughters may recapture their ancestors' bloom and force."

It appears from old family records, and from inscriptions on gravestones, that the early colonists had, on the average, two or three wives apiece; not all at once, however, but one wife after another. These women died, the one after the other, in consequence of over-heroic efforts to people this vast western continent; the women believing, that, in so doing, they were performing a divinely-appointed task. With the social conditions of their day, the civilization of their day, the housekeeping of their day, and, above all, the religion of their day, the Puritan women had a "sphere" wherein they could assuage, by constant exercise, the intense activities of their souls and spirits. That "sphere" can never be restored. The American women can never be put back into the religious and domestic condition of their great-grandmothers. Since the time of our great-grandmothers, we have had an American Revolution and a French Revolution, to say nothing of partial ineffectual revolutions all over Europe. In consequence of these revolutions, we have had a multiplicity of newspapers, no end of pamphlets on political economy, a rapid advance of experimental science, the establishment of public schools, and the rise of socialism and communism. Thorough conservatism always has obscurantism as its indispensable ally; and obscurantism never yet obtained any effectual foothold in New England. To instruct a people, without, at the same time, making a well thought-

out, deliberate, and radical change in its legal condition and social organization, is to inaugurate the Social Revolution; and this is the precise thing that the Americans have done. If you take a man from the plough, and educate him, you must give him an enlarged sphere of activity; for he will never willingly return to the plough under the old conditions. Public schools mean social regeneration, or else revolution. Protestant Prussia thought she could *direct* the education of her people, supposing that education might have a form impressed upon it by mere instruction, not knowing that education directs itself, and receives its form from the outbreaking spontaneities of the human soul: she therefore gave her people universal and gratuitous instruction; and to-day the revolutionary agitators regard Prussia as being, so far as their projects are concerned, ahead of France, and more completely in their hands. In Prussia the social revolution is imminent. The same causes work in the same way on our side of the water. Our girls read the newspapers, and, moreover, they read French novels. They know Manfred: they know Lelia also. They also speculate upon the problem whether the world would be able to get along with the children of Manfred and Lelia, in the case that those two should, unfortunately, ever be married. None of the more refined speculations of French and German infidelity have been kept hidden from our young ladies. Can you blot out from the hearts of our girls the results of a hundred years and more of spontaneity and of sedulous training? Can you put them back into the position of their great-grandmothers,

who knew little, and cared for nothing, beyond the routine of housekeeping, and the Shorter Westminster Catechism?

There are many single rooms in the upper stories of the new buildings on the burned district, in which you may find a hundred girls working together. Go into the stores on Washington Street, Winter Street, Tremont Street, or Hanover Street, and you will find girls behind almost every counter, and in almost every accountant's desk. Go into the street at the edge of the evening, and you will see flocks of girls going home from their work, almost all of them pretty, many with intellectual faces, but, unfortunately, very few of them showing any trace of years. Their average wages are less than a dollar a day; and, for those of them that wait behind counters, to be prettily dressed is a necessity. What would our great-grandmothers have thought of this state of things? Will you have all these girls go out to service in other women's households? If these girls should go out to service, what would become of the clothing business, the paper-box business, the stitching of ladies' shoes, and a hundred other industries, without which the material prosperity of Boston would be null, and the husbands of the mistresses would have no money wherewith to pay the wages of the servant-maids? If the producers should fail, the merchants and bankers would also become bankrupt.

The advance of the nineteenth century civilization has already created, in this country, contradistinguished employing and employed classes. Are the women of the employing classes any better off than

the others? Judging from their frantic outcries for woman-suffrage, masculine education, and new property laws, we should infer, that, although their material welfare is not seriously endangered as yet, they are finding themselves on the brink of a new social condition, in which real happiness is impossible. The instincts of the ladies are everywhere alarmed. The housekeeping strain has become so intense, that the rich ladies, who live and receive on a grand scale, are no longer able to bear it. Our great-grandmothers would never have been able to keep house under our modern conditions, with our multiplicity of servants, and in our up-and-down structures, five and six stories steep: they required the old-fashioned two-story house, with a garden round it, and the pig-pen, for the reception of refuse, at an easy distance. They were competent themselves to do the whole work of their own households, and were independent of servants. Air-tight stoves, furnaces, gas, Cochituate water, with the necessity for eternal plumbing, horse-cars, steam-cars, dependence upon servants, waterproofs, india-rubber overshoes, foreign travel, foreign literature, new-fangled dances, and a thousand other things, have revolutionized the system of American life.

Again: the just, necessary, and inevitable changes that are made by the Massachusetts legislature, year after year, regularly, respecting the tenure of women's property, are putting the women into an impossible situation. As soon as the wife's property will be no longer liable, in any way whatever, for the husband's debts, there will arise a logical necessity for a legis-

lative declaration of the non-liability of the husband for debts contracted by the wife for her own support; but, when the husband is no longer liable for the wife's support, legal marriage, as it has heretofore been defined by the statute-book, is at an end. Besides, the present extravagant rate of living, and the growing absolute independence of the women in respect to property, render the young men averse to marriage.

"When travelling in the East, some years ago, it was my fortune to be summoned as a physician into a harem. With curious and not unwilling steps I obeyed the summons. While examining the patient, nearly a dozen Syrian girls — a grave Turk's wifely crowd, his matrimonial bouquet, and armful of connubial bliss — pressed around the divan with eyes and ears intent, to see and hear a Western hakim's medical examination. As I looked upon their well-developed forms, their brown skins, rich with the blood and sun of the East, and their unintelligent, sensuous faces, I thought that if it were possible to marry the Oriental care of woman's organization to the Western liberty and culture of her brain, there would be a new birth and loftier type of womanly grace and force."

The Oriental woman has "a sphere" with which she is ignorant enough and stupid enough to be satisfied; but, as a general thing, she is not well versed in physiology; and her "care for her organization" is, like that of the female animals, not reflective and deliberate. The Puritan women had a "sphere," and a magnificent one. The existing American woman has no longer any adequate "sphere" of her own. The ideals of the American woman simply torment and exasperate her, and that because she has no sufficient opportunity to actualize them. When women find the sphere of their spontaneous activity becoming

more and more narrowed every day, some of them accept the situation, and degenerate into mere human animals: those of them who are more ambitious compete with the men, try to become men, and destroy themselves physiologically in the way described by Dr. Clarke; but the great majority sulk. Sometimes, however, the situation becomes too intense; and intellectual and spiritual women feel that they are menaced, by the current of events, with being reduced to the condition of Asiatic women, and are apprehensive of becoming mere physiological organisms, and articles of ornament and luxury: it is then, and usually then only, that many of them conclude the world has gone on long enough, and silently abort their children. A state of society in which a woman finds nothing *for her* is one that she regards as not worth living in, and one which her children's interest requires that they should not be born into. History furnishes examples of great and richly-endowed races that suddenly and mysteriously went out of existence at the very moment their civilization culminated. Of the builders of the strange pre-historic walls that are found scattered all the way from Syria to Spain, we know little or nothing, except the reason of their sudden extinction as a race. The race that made the sculptures on the ruined palaces and temples of Central America was doomed to become suddenly extinct, like the flame of a candle that is blown out: the sculptures themselves were foregoing exponents of the result. But it is not in the destiny of the Yankee race, transformed as it has been by Christianity, to thus die out. The great curse of the present day, the

cause of almost all the evils that afflict us, is the continually increasing absence of religion. In Christianity — and not, as Dr. Clarke affirms, in physiological development — "lies the hope of the race." Woman shall not live by bread alone. The women are asking for the bread of life; and Dr. Clarke offers them something, which, to the great majority of them, is an inadequate and useless physiological stone. He counsels them to do reflectively, and with intention, what the animal women of Asia do unthinkingly, and from mere nature. In this, he says, "lies the hope of the race." It is written of Moses and the children of Israel, when they knew not what to do, because of the chariots of the Egyptians who were pursuing them, that "The Lord said unto Moses, Wherefore criest thou unto me? speak unto the children of Israel, that they *go forward!*" The American women cannot go backward: let them, therefore, *go forward.* Where? Into what? Who knows? When St. Peter cast his net in the sea to fetch up what he might, he caught fish that were individually unknown to him, since he had never seen them before. The World-Sphinx crouches now, where she has crouched from the beginning, on the exact verge of the dark unknown, suckling her twin dusky cubs, — Nature and Man. Neither men nor women are competent to forecast the human forces, substantial forms, and fatalities of the future. But the Man-cub is foredoomed to grow, from generation to generation: it is Nature only that remains unprogressive.

We have now said all that we have to say on the introductory part of Dr. Clarke's book, and see no

reason why we should read the remainder of the work. But we say to the women, "Don't get mad (it will be of no use), but *read every word of the book.* Dr. Clarke means well, and, as he goes on, will have less and less occasion to digress into metaphysics, and into the treatment of social questions. If you do not take care of your bodies, you may become unable to provide for your own wants, or to vindicate your personalities, and your individual sovereignty over yourselves. Be careful, however, not to know too much physiology. Keep the books of physiology, except the more decent of them, like this one of Dr. Clarke's, out of your schools; and, above all, never permit your girl-scholars to get a sight of the damnable pictures with which they are usually illustrated. Such pictures will do the girls no good."

And now, in conclusion, we venture to indulge the hope that what we have said may meet with the approval of the pale, intellectual ladies — themselves healthy mothers of healthy children, and of children having the true enduring nerve in them — who placed Dr. Clarke's book in our hand, with the request that we should express an opinion *about* it.

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